

(17)

A

695.9.11
4

DISCOURSE

UPON THE

SELF-EXISTENCE

OF

JESUS CHRIST.

By WILLIAM ROMAINE,

Lecturer of St. Dunstan's in the West.

Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of
Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.
Exodus iii. 14.



L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WORRALL, at the *Dove* in *Bell-yard*, near *Lincoln's-Inn*; and E. WITHERS, at the *Seven Stars*, near the *Temple Gate*, in *Fleet-street*. 1755.

[Price Six-pence.]

DISCOURSE

ON THE

SHEEP-SHEPHERD

OF

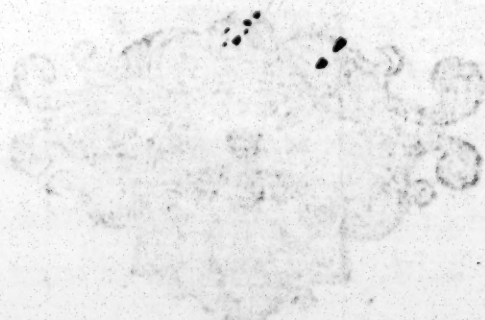
THE CHURCH

IN

THE CHURCH

OF THE CHURCH

OF THE CHURCH



Printed for J. Johnson, at the British Museum, near Lincoln's Inn, in the Strand, London, 1755.

[Price Six-pence]



P R E F A C E.

Several persons have earnestly requested me to make the following discourse public. When they heard it preached at St. George's Hanover-square, and at St. Dunstan's in the West, they found great benefit from it, and they have made me hope it may be as useful to others, as it was to them. I have therefore offered it to the public, such as it is. The adorable person, of whom it treats, will overlook its imperfections: He knows that it is the produce of a grateful heart, willing to make some return, how poor and small soever, for the numerous, great, and inestimable blessings received from his hands. And if it shall please him to make this discourse the means of strengthening one believer, or of converting one unbeliever, may the glory

P R E F A C E.

be his. I desire no honour but to be an humble instrument in his hands of magnifying and exalting Jesus Christ, who is above all blessing and praise; for he is over all God blessed for ever. Amen.



JOHN



J O H N viii. 24.

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins : for if ye believe not, that I AM, ye shall die in your sins.



HIS is a very awakening scripture, and ought to rouse up your particular attention. The doctrine here maintained is the self-existence of Jesus Christ ; which is not a mere speculative point, it is not an indifferent thing, whether you believe it or not ; but your eternal salvation is so much concerned in it, that if you do not believe it you will die in your sins, and will have every one of them to answer for at the tribunal of God. Is not this an interesting subject ? Is not every one of us nearly concerned in what is to befall us after death ? And has not our Lord here forewarned us what is to befall them, who deny his divinity ? *They shall die in their sins*, and this he repeats twice in the text, the more strongly to impress it upon their memories. And what is it then *to die in their sins* ? Is it a light trifling matter not worth

worth your care and consideration? To die in the midst of the pollution of a sinful life, to be taken away with all the guilt of it upon your heads, and to find after death no atonement, no mediator, to protect you from the just indignation of the most holy God, who has declared that he is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity — is all this of no consequence to you? Does not the danger come near enough to alarm even the most stupid and insensible sinner? But yet this is not the worst of *dying in their sins*. It is the most striking circumstance to consider to what a depth of misery your pollution and guilt must sink you. Sin and misery are inseparably connected, and none can deliver you from sin, but he who came to take away the sins of the world; and he cannot deliver you as man, he must be God who can have merit sufficient to take away sin, therefore if you deny him to be God, your sins remain, and misery must be your portion — misery the greatest you can suffer, in soul and body, among the condemned spirits in hell for ever and ever.

This is the meaning of *dying in your sins*. And can there be any truth more affecting or any subject more interesting? Does not the very proposing it awaken your hopes and fears? Every one of you is concerned at the peril of his eternal happiness to come to a point in this case, and to be determined;
and

and therefore, men and brethren, let me intreat you to examine the matter strictly and solemnly. The divinity of Jesus Christ is the very foundation of the christian religion. It is the first and principal article. The whole rests upon it; even what is called the morality of the gospel receives its obligation from his being the true God. If he was in any respect inferior to the father, christianity would be altogether the most stupid and absurd system of religion, and the most gross piece of idolatry that was ever invented in the world: for the christian church has always acknowledged Jesus Christ to be God co-equal and co-eternal with the father, and has offered prayers and praises unto him, and served him with every act of religious worship: And the church of *England* has given him divine honour in the same full and ample manner, as he claimed it, *John* v. 23. "That all men should honour the son, *even as* they honour the father." Certainly it is necessary on all these accounts to examine this fundamental point: And let us then consult the sacred books upon it, and hear their judgment, and abide by their determination. And they speak as full to the point as any unprejudiced person could desire, and they have set the doctrine in so clear a light, and it appears to me with such strong evidence, that I have no more doubt of Christ's self-existence,

tence, than I have of mine own existence. And this perfect conviction (which I thank God I find in multitudes of other persons) makes me wish out of love to your souls, that every one of you was as perfectly convinced, lest ye should die in your sins; and if ye can but desire conviction, ye shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. And may the adorable Jesus, whose honour I am going to defend, now plead his own cause with you. May he send his grace into all your hearts, and convince you that he is a God indeed, while I am speaking upon the two propositions contained in the text.

First, Jesus Christ is the self-existent God.

Secondly, If ye believe it not, ye shall die in your sins, *therefore I said unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins.*

First, The self-existence of Jesus Christ is declared in these words, believe that I AM, that I have existence in myself, and exist by a necessity of nature: For I made all things, and without me was not any thing made that is made. I am the creator, they are my creatures. And the creator must exist in a different manner from the creatures. All things are dependent upon
me,

me, and have only a derived existence — they are, what I made them, and they continue, as long as I support them. No creature ever came into life without my power, and when I take away their breath they die, and turn again to their dust: so that they have only a dependent being, whereas my existence is necessary and underived. I AM is my incommunicable name, and what it means is my incommunicable attribute.

Thus our blessed Saviour is the great and eternal I AM. He is Jehovah: for he exists in a different manner from all other beings and things, as the word Jehovah denotes. The christian writers, as far as I know, are unanimous in their interpretation of this divine name; they all agree that it relates to the existence of the essence, and is descriptive of that independent property, by which Jehovah has existence in himself, whereas all other beings and things derive their existence from him. And to this the very Jews assent, acknowledging that Jehovah signifies the essence which necessarily exists. This therefore is a settled point. Now our Saviour is frequently called Jehovah in the old testament, and thereby the self-existence of the divine nature is ascribed to him. Thus the prophet *Isaiab* xliii. 11. *I, even I, am Jehovah, and besides me there is no Saviour.* There was no Jesus, no Saviour, but Jehovah; therefore Jehovah

and Jesus are one. And again we read, *ch. xlix. 26. All flesh shall know, that I Jehovah am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.* And the prophet *Jeremy. l. 34. says, Their Redeemer is strong, Jehovah of hosts is his name* — the name Jehovah belongs to the Redeemer; it is his incommunicable title. And since it is agreed on all hands, that Jehovah signifies the self-existent essence, consequently Jesus Christ is self-existent, for he is Jehovah. This argument is, I think, very clear and full, and the force of it may be thus summed up. Jehovah is self-existent, but Jesus Christ is Jehovah, therefore he is self-existent.

In this sense our Lord says in the text, if ye believe not that I AM, that Jehovah is in me of a truth, ye shall die in your sins. I AM cannot relate to his created being: All the sophistry of arianism and socinianism cannot wrest the words to such a sense, because the jews could not but believe that he existed, when they heard him say, I AM; or if it was possible to disbelieve it, yet it would not have been a capital crime, unless he had been something more than a created being: Therefore the very reason of the thing proves, that he claimed some manner of existence different from human, and which it is absolutely necessary for every man to believe, unless he would die in his sins, and suffer the punishment due to them for

for ever. The translators have done great injury to this scripture by inserting the word *he*, I AM *he*, which is not in the original, and by putting it in they have destroyed both the sense of the passage, and also the force of the argument: For I am *he* ought to refer to something said; but it has no reference, no sort of connection, either with what goes before or follows after. And therefore it is as absurd to insert the word here, as it would be in *Exodus*, where upon *Moses's* enquiring for some descriptive name, by which the *Israelites* might know that the God of their fathers had sent him to deliver them, "God said unto him, I AM THAT
 " I AM, and thou shalt say unto the children of *Israel*, I AM hath sent me unto
 " you." Would it not be abominable nonsense to read the words, I am he that I am he, and I am he hath sent me unto you. The learned world, christians and jews, would not allow of this glaring absurdity; for they have allowed that this passage in *Exodus* is expressive of the self-existence of the Deity. I AM denotes the necessary manner in which he exists, and since this is the meaning of it in one part of scripture, certainly it must mean the same thing in every part of scripture, especially when it is used by a person, who claimed to himself all the attributes of divinity; and therefore the meaning of the expression, if there was any obscurity in the usage of it in the new testa-

ment, may be clearly ascertained from its usage in the old. When God sent *Moses* to the *Israelites* with this divine name I AM, and when Christ, who never scrupled to call himself God, assumed the same name I AM, certainly the same words spoken on the same subject must convey the same idea of self-existence, and whoever is self-existent is the true God, but Christ is self-existent, therefore he is the true God.

When the arians and socinians are pressed hard with scripture arguments, they will allow Christ to be God in some limited and restrained sense of the word; but they cannot bear to hear of his self-existence, because this makes him equal with the father, which they deny: For it seems an insuperable difficulty to them, that he whom the scripture calls a son should have the same self-existence with the father. This is a standing objection with them, and with every other species of infidels, but this objection upon the true state of the case vanishes at once: For it is founded upon a very gross mistake, both of the nature of the doctrine, and also of the scripture explanation of it.

The nature of the doctrine is this. In the unity of the divine essence there are three persons equal in all perfections and attributes, so that none is before or after other, none is greater or less than another, but the
glory

glory is equal; the majesty co-eternal. The trinity in unity is thus expressed in scripture, 1 *John* v. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the father, the word, and the holy ghost, and these three are one.* "One," says the unbeliever, How can that be? "How can three be one? That's a contradiction." If it be, it is a contradiction of his own making: For unless they be three in the same respect as they are one, which opinion could never be maintained by any man in his senses, then he must take the contradiction upon himself; and there may be, for any thing he knows to the contrary, three persons of one essence, unless he can prove that the unity of the essence absolutely excludes personality. But before we can allow him this, he must first give us a plain account of the manner of the existence of the divine essence, and must demonstrate that it cannot admit of any persons in it; which he cannot possibly demonstrate by the light of nature. The most acute and enlightened genius is not equal to the subject. It is as far above his capacity, as the heavens are above the earth. Let him soar aloft upon the strongest pinions of moral truth, and try to measure infinity with the longest chain of metaphysical reasoning, yet when he came down from his towering flight, he could give us no fresh intelligence concerning the divine existence. The mode and manner

manner of it would be still unknown. We know that there is an immortal spirit united to the body, but does any philosopher pretend to determine the mode of the existence of this created spirit? What idea can he form of it? Whence does he borrow his idea? Or in what kind of language will he communicate it unto another? If he be not clear in this more easy point, how can he form an idea of the mode of existence of Jehovah? Can he determine how an infinite spiritual essence exists? What idea has he of the manner of existence of an essence, which was from eternity, and which was the first cause of all other beings? When unbelievers will write upon this subject, and settle the mode of existence of an uncreated essence, then they may speak with some certainty upon it. But while they confess, that they know not the mode of the divine existence, and yet maintain that Jehovah cannot exist but in one person, is it not evident, that their conduct is inconsistent? For the personality is founded on the manner in which the essence exists; this they do not pretend to determine, and yet they deny the personality of the essence, and venture their eternity upon it. Is not this conduct absurd and irrational? And will you then ever listen to what unbelievers may assert concerning the manner of the divine existence? For they are indeed absolutely ignorant of it, and you may be assured

assured of their ignorance, if you only ask them to account for the manner of the existence of a created spirit. And when they give up this point, which they must, then urge this question to them, How can you pretend to account for the manner of the existence of an infinite uncreated spirit, after you have owned that you cannot account for the manner of the existence of a finite created spirit? Even to pretend to it is a most glaring absurdity ; and therefore we may conclude upon the footing of human reason, that there may be three persons in the unity of the divine essence, and the scripture positively maintains there are three, the father, the son, and the holy spirit, and these three are one. And

If nothing remain for the infidel to object to the state of the doctrine, what can he offer against the scripture explanation of it? There can be no difficulty but what arises from the names of the divine persons, father, son, and holy spirit, and these have been a great handle of objection, and are still with unbelievers, who are so blinded with their vices, that they know nothing of the true sense and meaning of scripture, but only look into it for matter of cavil: They suppose, with ignorance common to infidelity, that these names were to give us ideas of the manner, in which the persons exist in the essence, but the scripture had a quite

quite different view in using them. The ever blessed trinity took the names of father, son, and holy spirit, not to describe in what manner they exist as divine persons, but in what manner the divine persons have acted for us, and for our salvation. These names were to give us ideas of the distinct offices, which the trinity had agreed to sustain in the œconomy of our redemption. The scripture informs us, St. *Paul* frequently, *Eph.* i. 4, 3, 11. 2 *Tim.* i. 9. *Titus* i. 2, &c. and St. *Peter* first *Ep.* i. 20, that the covenant of grace was made before the world, and the gracious plan of man's salvation was settled before he had his being. According to the plan of this covenant one of the divine persons agreed to demand infinite satisfaction for sin, when mankind should offend, and to be the father of the human nature of Jesus Christ, and our father through him; and therefore he is called God the *Father*, not to describe his nature, but his office. Another of the divine persons covenanted to become a son, to take our nature upon him, and in it to pay the infinite satisfaction for sin, and therefore he is called *Son*, *Son of God*, and such like names, not to describe his divine nature, but his divine office. Another of the divine persons covenanted to make the infinite satisfaction of the Son of God effectual, by inspiring the spirits of men, and disposing them to

to receive it, and therefore he is called the holy *Inspirer*, or holy Spirit, and the *spirit* of God, not to describe his divine nature but his divine office. The terms *father*, *son*, and *holy spirit*, are terms of œconomy, and are accordingly used in scripture, to describe the distinct parts, which the ever blessed and adorable trinity sustained in our redemption.

I wish it was in my power to explain my meaning in a manner, which you may all easily understand. The doctrine of the trinity is the most necessary article of the christian religion, and we cannot take one safe step in the way to heaven, without being clear in it. And since it is the very foundation of your faith, I therefore intreat your more particular attention, while I am considering it. The scripture makes no difference between the divine persons, except what is made by the distinct offices, which they sustain in the covenant of grace. The persons are each equal in every perfection and attribute ; none is before or after other ; none is greater or less than another ; but the whole three persons are co-eternal together and co-equal. And consequently Christ, who was from eternity co-equal with the father, did not make himself inferior, because he covenanted to become a son, nor did the holy spirit, who was from eternity co-equal with the father and the son, make

himself inferior, because he covenanted to make the spirits of men holy by his grace and influence. Son and holy spirit are names of office, and the names of their offices certainly cannot lessen the dignity of their nature, but should rather exalt them in our eyes, for whose salvation they condescended to sustain these offices. Our blessed Lord was Jehovah, when he covenanted to be made flesh, and to become a son; and the very nature and terms of the covenant prove, that at the making of it he must have been a person of the self-existent essence, because he had thereby such offices committed to him, as none but the true God was able to sustain. The whole œconomy and government of the world, from the time of its creation to the final dissolution, was put into his hands, and therefore the scripture expressly assures us, that he created it, that he governs it by his providence, that he redeemed it by his blood, and that he is to come again at the last day, in all his glory to judge it. And he, who was almighty to create all things, who was all-wise to govern all things, who had infinite merit to redeem all things, and who is to be God the judge of all at the last great day, certainly this almighty, this all-wise, this all-meritorious, and divine judge, must be self-existent. And being possessed of these offices, he might truly say, I AM; because he could not but have

have necessary existence in himself, who was the first cause, and who gave existence to every other being and thing.

What has been said in defence of the first proposition in the text may be summed up with this argument. The divine essence is self-existent, therefore the persons in the essence are also self-existent, but Jesus Christ is one of the persons in the essence, for he is frequently called Jehovah in the old testament, and the new declares, that he and the father are one, consequently he is self-existent; from whence I raise this syllogism. Whoever is self-existent is the true God, but Jesus Christ is self-existent, therefore he is the true God. This is a plain syllogism, and it is so evident upon scripture principles, that I defy all the arians and socinians in the world to answer it; for it seems as certain that Jesus Christ is a person of the self-existent essence, as that there is a self-existent essence. Christ is the great and eternal I A M, true and very God, equal in all things with the father and the holy spirit, as touching his Godhead, and therefore to the holy blessed and glorious trinity, we ascribe equal dominion and honour and worship, now and for ever, according to the doctrine of scripture, and the constant practice of the christian church. And

Let no person think, that this is a speculative point. It is not an indifferent thing,

whether you receive it or not, but your eternal state depends upon it. You must receive it, or perish for ever; for whosoever disbelieves it shall be damned. This may sound very harsh in the ears of free and candid disquisitors, but I really cannot soften it. I am not fond of thundering out damnation, any more than men in these moderate times may be of hearing it, and you know that I very seldom have the word in my mouth; but there is certainly such a thing as damnation, and the Almighty has threatned to inflict it upon the deniers of Christ's divinity, and let men make ever so light of it, he will infallibly inflict it, and therefore I must again admonish you, that whoever does not believe Jesus Christ to be self-existent, and thereby equal to the father, shall be damned. And does not the text declare the same thing? *They shall die in their sins*, and this is so far from being any thing short of damnation, that *dying in sin* is the very lowest state of infernal misery, as I am to prove under the

Second proposition. If ye believe not that I AM, says Christ, *ye shall die in your sins*. Dying in sin is a clear expression, whose meaning cannot easily be mistaken. It denotes the most dreadful state of departing sinners, who have no mediator or atonement in the world of spirits to which they are going, but they leave this world with all
the

the pollution and guilt of their crimes upon the soul, and when they appear before the tribunal of infinite justice, the horrid deformity and wickedness of them will then be manifest: they will then have no robe to cover the offensive and nauseous leprosy of their impurities; their abominable filthiness will then break out, and how can the most holy and pure God look with delight upon these loathsome lepers? He declares he cannot. He is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity. He cannot behold them; and therefore they must be shut out of his presence, as the lepers were shut out of the camp; and since they never can be made clean, they must be shut out for ever. Nothing can purge the conscience from sin, but the all-meritorious blood of Jesus Christ. This alone cleanseth us from all sin; but this unbelievers reject, therefore their sin remaineth. They must answer for it at the bar of justice, and whatever punishment it deserves they must suffer it in soul and body, and if there be truth in God, their punishment must be eternal. These are his own words, at which one might reasonable think the heart of the most obdurate infidel would tremble. *Isa. xxxiii. 13, 14. Hear ye that are far off what I have done, and ye that are near acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites*

crites ; who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire ? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings ? Who shall ? Certainly they who die in their sins. Sin first kindled these flames of hell, and sinners must endure them. And the chief of sinners, the arians and socinians, must dwell with the devouring fire, and with the everlasting burnings.

I have seen the deniers of Christ's divinity very warm and angry at this state of the case, and have heard them complain loudly of our want of charity. They do not love to be told of hell torments, and they think it very hard, that they should be sent to hell for a speculative point, (as they softly term rejecting Christ's self-existence) quite an harmless opinion, a mere subject of debate and free enquiry. It may seem very light to them, but it is in fact of the same consequence as denying the being of God, and if they will make their free enquiries and debates about it, and after enquiring and debating reject it, they should remember, that they do this at the peril of their lives. Denying Christ to be self-existent is not a small crime, it is the greatest that a man can commit ; for what is it to deny the king's title to the crown ? Is it not high treason ? And what is it then to deny the Godhead of the blessed and only potentate, the king of kings, and lord of lords ? Is not

not this high treason against the supreme majesty of heaven? And when unbelievers deny the Godhead of Jesus Christ, rob him of his self-existence, erect societies on purpose to stab him with their insolent blasphemies, and try to pull him out of his eternal throne, and then endeavour what in them lies, to strip him of his divine glory, degrading and sinking him down into a mere creature, and trampling under foot, as if he were but dross and dung, the most adorable God of heaven and earth, what will you call these offences? Are they not overt-acts of open rebellion and of high treason? And if the least of these against an earthly king would render the offenders unnatural rebels and worthy of death, must not the crimes increase in proportion to the infinite dignity of the king against whom they are committed? High treason against the Godhead of Jesus Christ, how much soever unbelievers may try to palliate it, is certainly an infinite crime, and if God be true, it will meet with an infinite punishment; for if ye believe not that I A M, says the self-existent God himself, ye shall die in your sins, and these unatoned for shall not only exclude you from the glories of heaven, but shall also sentence you to the endless torments of hell.

And this method of proceeding against the deniers of Christ's self-existence is not,

as they would insinuate, harsh, and rigorous, but is founded in reason and equity; because every man is a sinner and guilty in the sight of God, not only by actual, but also by original transgression, *by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation*, and therefore all men being under sentence of condemnation, want an atonement for their sins. This atonement is required by, and is to be made to, infinite justice, and whoever makes it must be an infinite person, capable of doing an infinitely meritorious act; so that he cannot be any thing less than a person of the self-existent essence. If he were a creature of ever so great dignity, the very highest in the rank of beings, yet as he is but a creature, he could do no action which could merit for another, much less which could have infinite merit; consequently he could make no atonement to infinite justice, and therefore unless Christ be self-existent, we must all die in our sins, and answer for them before the tribunal of God: And the just wages of sin is death, death of the body to this world, and death of both body and soul from God and his glory in the next world for ever and ever. And this is indeed the melancholy case of every infidel. He denies the virtue of Christ's merits to atone as God, and of course he can have no atonement; for nothing less than an infinite being can make

make an infinite atonement; and the infidel without such an atonement must be under the guilt both of original and actual transgression. He has no sacrifice, no atonement to propitiate the justice of God the father, by whom a firm and sure decree has been in this case made and provided, that *without shedding of blood there is no remission*: But he rejects the merits of the blood of the lamb of God, which has been shed for sin, and which alone can take away the sins of the world; for which reason there is no remission for him, but he dies in his sins with all the pollution and the guilt of them upon his conscience, and when he appears at the bar of justice he will find his judge a jealous God, and a consuming fire. And how will he then be able to protect himself from the wrath of the Almighty? Offended omnipotence he cannot escape, he cannot resist, and who can say what a degree of misery offended omnipotence will inflict? Oh it is a dreadful thing, beyond imagination dreadful, to fall into the hands of the living God! and whoever rejects the divine merits of Christ's atonement, will feel his everlasting displeasure: for after rejecting them *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.* And if he who despised Moses's law died without mercy, under two or three

D

witnesses:

witnesses : of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under foot the son of God—hath troden under foot his divinity (as all infidels do) hath trampled, and even stamped upon the self-existent God, as if he was something baser than a worm, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace — Doing despite unto the spirit of grace is the last stage of infidelity, and may the almighty God keep every one of you from it, lest you should die in your sins and perish for ever.

I chose to finish the second proposition in the text with these striking words of *St. Paul*, (*Heb. 10, 26, 27, &c.*) because they are clear and full to the point, and expressly declare the judgment and fiery indignation, which every one will meet with who treads under foot the Son of God. Let the infidel consider, whether he does not tread him under his feet, when he ridicules the almighty Creator of the world, and with treason blacker than ever was hatched in hell, tries to rob the eternal God of his divinity. Does not he account the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, who sets no value upon the most precious blood of the lamb of God? And must not he die in his sins, and rise from the dead in his sins, and appear in his sins at the last great day, and go with
his

his sins to the place of eternal punishment, who contrary to God's decree has resolved to put his trial upon this issue, that without shedding of blood there may be remission? Before any remission can be obtained, there must not only be blood shed, but also blood of an infinite value, and there cannot be infinite value in any sacrifice, except in the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot. The merits of this unblemished and spotless lamb the infidels deny, whereby they reject the only method which God has appointed for the remission of sins. This crime approaches so very near to doing despite to the spirit of grace, and to grieving and quenching him, that my heart mourns for these deluded men, and I cannot but wish they were as much concerned for their own salvation, as I am for them. I see their guilt, to which they are blind. I see their danger, against which they shut their own eyes. I behold them ready to die in their sins, and the pit of destruction open to receive them, they are on the very precipice, and in a moment may fall into hell. My dear fellow-creatures, would to God I could call you fellow-christians, if you have any love left for your immortal souls, stop and consider. Open your eyes I beseech you, and see your danger. See how near you are to the pit. If you take one step more, you may perish

for ever. And why will you choose eternal misery? I call upon and intreat you, while there is yet a possibility of escaping it, to awaken your hopes and fears. If you can but throw down your arms and submit, still you may find mercy. The God against whom ye have rebelled will pardon, if ye ask it of him with faith and repentance, and he will give you faith and repentance, if you can pray for them. His breast is full of compassion for you. And you will taste of his pardoning love, so soon as you acknowledge him to be a God almighty to pardon. And if none of these motives can prevail with you to open your eyes, may he, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine into your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And now having gone through the argument, I intreat you, my brethren, to give me your favourable attention, while I am endeavouring to make my advantage of what has been said, and to bring it home with power and conviction to your hearts. The scripture which we have been considering is most awful and solemn, and holds out to us a doctrine of eternal importance, *viz.* that we must die in our sins, unless we believe the self-existence of Jesus Christ. This doctrine I divided into two propositions, under the first it was proposed to prove that Jesus Christ

Christ is a person of the self-existent essence, from whence it followed, *secondly*, that every one must die in his sins, unless he believes Christ's self-existence. And if reason and fair argument could prevail against mens prejudices and sins, these two propositions would appear as evident as the sun at noon-day. Indeed they do appear with compleat evidence to every true christian, and I openly declare, that I am as fully convinced of the self-existence of Jesus Christ, as I am of my own existence, and therefore with this full conviction upon my mind, it was incumbent upon me to speak with great openness and freedom to those persons, if there be any of them among you, who deny the self-existence of Jesus Christ. And I hope he will second my intreaties with his grace, and accompany them with his divine blessing, while I am calling upon you once more to consider and to weigh impartially the arguments which have been now laid before you. They contain a very small part of the evidence for our Lord's divinity. The scripture has offered us several proofs, which have not been at present touched upon; but I hope enough has been said to convince you, if your minds lay open to conviction. The great infidel objection against Christ's self-existence is taken from the unity of the divine essence; this unity we allow, for it is written, *Deut. 6. iv. The Lord our God is one Lord, Jehovah our Aleim*
is

is one Jehovah; but then we maintain that the unity of the essence cannot exclude personality, unless it could be demonstrated, that the manner in which the essence exists will not admit of any persons in it. But this you cannot demonstrate. It is impossible to demonstrate it; because you do not know the manner of the existence of any spiritual being, and consequently it is impossible for you to demonstrate, that the scripture account of the personality is false, and yet at the peril of your eternal salvation you will venture to deny what it is impossible you should disprove. Do you not see what an inconsistent and absurd part you herein act? Do you not openly fight against reason, as well as against scripture and your own happiness? You have not the shadow of an argument against Christ's divinity, and yet you are not afraid to commit high treason against *his* supreme majesty, who is almighty to punish. Why, my brethren, will you fight against the Almighty? Rebel no longer, throw down your arms, submit to Jesus, prostrate yourselves before him, and acknowledge him to be the self-existent God. And,

Let it be no hindrance to your owning his divinity, that the scripture calls him a *son, son of God, son of man, &c.* for son is a name of office, and not of nature; it is not to give you an idea of the manner of his divine existence, but of the manner of his
divine

divine actions. He was the true self-existent God, he was Jehovah from eternity, but he took the name of son, when he covenanted to become a son, and to be made flesh for us and for our salvation ; so that it is a name of œconomy, descriptive not of his nature, but of his office. This is the scripture doctrine. And there is not one infidel objection against the self-existence of Jesus Christ, but what may be easily solved upon this state of the case. I intreat you therefore to examine it carefully, and if you will give it a fair hearing, laying all prejudice aside, you will not be able to resist the force and evidence of it.

But if you will shut your hearts against conviction, rooted and grounded so deeply and strongly in infidelity, that no arguments can move you, yet if reason has lost its influence, will not self-love make some impression upon you ? When the danger draws near, and your own souls are ready to perish, certainly you will then begin to be concerned for your own welfare. And does not the danger come near enough to strike your fears, when you are dying in your sins ? when you are guilty of a crime, the certain consequence of which (unrepented of) is everlasting misery ? And if Jesus Christ be not your God, you will have no atonement, no mediator after death, but must answer for every sin, which you have
com-

committed, at the bar of infinite justice, and you may read your sentence among the records of infallible truth — *The unbelieving shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death, Rev. xxi. 8.* This scripture will as surely be fulfilled, as God is true ; and he will be almighty to fulfil it in your destruction : For are you not unbelieving ? Do you not disbelieve the first article of the christian faith ? And why then should you hope to escape the punishment here threatened to unbelief ? You can have no reasonable hope. God, who cannot lie, must execute his threatenings. And do you think it prudent and safe to make the trial, whether he be a God of truth ? If you believe not, yet he abideth faithful. If you deny him, he also will deny you. And when he disowns you for his, justice must seize you and deliver you over to the tormentors, that this scripture may be fulfilled in your punishment. Oh ! my brethren, if your souls be dear and precious in your own eyes, do not choose hell torments ? Why will you die in your sins, and go deliberately into the lake, that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever ? Might not one infer from your conduct, that you were in love with hell ? For you cannot prove, that Jesus Christ is not God. It is impossible to prove it ; and why then will you deny his divinity, and with
overt-

overt-acts of high treason attempt to rob him of his self-existence? Why will you act such an absurd, such a wicked part, and destroy yourselves.

If I have not been able to offer any thing sufficient to awaken and to convince you, I have therefore more reason in the last place to pray for you. And I am sure all believers will join heartily with me in prayer to God for your conversion. We cannot but mourn over your present guilt, and your approaching ruin, and pour out our requests before the throne of grace for you, because we are assured, that you have departed from the living God. And let us now, my christian brethren, conclude, as we always begin, with looking up to God for his blessing, that our labours may not be in vain in the Lord.

O most adorable Jesus, our almighty God and Saviour, who hast declared, that unless ye believe that I AM, ye shall die in your sins, we bless and praise thee for giving us grace to believe in thy self-existence. Keep us, we beseech thee, stedfast in this faith, and grant that it may not dwell in our heads, and rest there as a speculative point of science, but enable it to operate upon our hearts, and there to produce in us all thy sweet and heavenly tempers, making us holy as thou art holy. And, O Lord, be pleased to awaken and convert all the deniers of thy

E

divinity,

divinity, and convince them that thou art a God indeed, by the happy work of thy good spirit upon their hearts, turning them from the error of their ways, and bringing every one of them into thy flock, that we may become one fold under one shepherd, and may with one heart and one voice give thanks and praise to father, son, and holy ghost, the holy, blessed and glorious trinity, to whom be equal honour and worship, and dominion, now and for ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

